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UNCLAS ALMATY 002048

SIPDIS

DEPT PASS TO OPIC - BALLINGER
DEPT PASS TO TDA FOR STEIN, EXIM FOR GLAZER
DEPT PASS TO AID - EE - PHILLIPS/RUSHING
DEPT PASS TO EPA - WFREEMAN
TREASURY FOR 4231/ITA/MAC/MLONDON, 4201/BISNIS/TGUNN
USDOC FOR 6110/ITA/TD/BI/RHALPERN
ANKARA FOR CFC
TASHKENT FOR EPUTNAM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [KZ](#) [ECONOMIC](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN ENVIRONMENT UPDATE - MAY 2005

Summary: This information is drawn primarily from the Kazakhstani local press, and has not been verified. The opinions expressed in this report, therefore, should not be interpreted by readers as conveying positions and/or policy of the U.S. Government.

- [1](#)1. U.S. Grant Finances Feasibility Study for Reconstruction of Gas Storage Units in Southern Kazakhstan
- [1](#)2. Nura River Fish Poisoned With Mercury
- [1](#)3. Danish Company Ready for De-mercurization Project in Temirtau
- [1](#)4. Kazakhstan Ranks Third Globally in Nuclear Fuel Production
- [1](#)5. Central Asian Conference on Renewable Energy Set for November 2005
- [1](#)6. New Textbook on Ecology Compiled in Central Asia
- [1](#)7. International Experts Train Kazakhstani Scientists to Detect, Guard Radioactive Material
- [1](#)8. Mazhilis Approves Draft Law on Ecological Audits
- [1](#)9. First Part of Syr Darya and Northern Aral Sea Project to Be Completed Soon
- [1](#)10. New Gas Treating Unit to Be Tested At Mittal Steel Temirtau in September

U.S. Grant Finances Feasibility Study for Reconstruction of

Gas Storage Units in Southern Kazakhstan

[1](#)1. The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) is providing a \$640,000 grant to modernize the Poltoratskoye and Akyltobe underground gas storage units (in Southern Kazakhstan and Zhambyl oblasts respectively). Kazakhstan's First Deputy Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Baktyrgozha Izmukhambetov and Ambassador Ordway signed a relevant agreement on May 11, the ministry's press service reported. The cost of the feasibility study, which will be implemented by BSI Industries, is \$912,426, including \$272,426 provided by the company (Interfax-Kazakhstan, May 11, 2005).

Nura River Fish Poisoned with Mercury

[1](#)2. Fish caught in the Nura River are poisoned with mercury - a grave consequence of carbide production in Temirtau. According to ecologists, the Samarkand and Intumak reservoirs on the outskirts of Temirtau have concentrations of 0.10-0.76 mg of mercury per kilogram of water. A dose of 0.006 mg per day is considered dangerous to human health. Nevertheless, people living in the area have to use Nura water in their vegetable gardens (Megapolis, April 30, 2005).

Danish Company Ready for De-mercurization Project in

Temirtau

[1](#)3. The Danish company "COWI" plans to clean up the mercury-contaminated premises of the former "Carbide" plant as well as the Alash industrial waste treatment plant. The company also plans to build a hazardous waste site in the Apan area. This site, which will be ready in 2006, will be used for safe storage of contaminated materials. The hazardous waste site will be used from 2007 through 2009. The waste site will be cleaned and rehabilitated in 2010. The total cost of the project is \$31 million. (Karaganda News, May 6, 2005).

Kazakhstan Ranks Third Globally in Nuclear Fuel Production

14. According to the U.S.-based trade publication UX Weekly, Kazakhstan ranks third in the world in uranium production. In 2004, Kazakhstan produced 3,719 tons - 9.4% of the world's volume. The leading uranium producer is Canada (29.2% share); Australia ranks second (22.6%). The National Atomic Company Kazatomprom's production in 2004 was 3,363 tons. By 2010, it plans to produce 15,000 tons per year, which would make Kazakhstan the world's top producer (www.gazeta.kz, Kazakhstan today, May 3, 2005).

Central Asian Conference on Renewable Energy Set for November 2005

15. On November 14-15, 2005, the Central Asian Conference on Renewable Energy will take place in Karaganda. It is organized by the Karaganda Oblast Ecological Museum, Ukraine's Agency on Renewable Energy and INFORSE of Denmark. The first day of the conference will be devoted to the status of and prospects for development of all types of renewable energy. The second day will be devoted to the prospects for developing biogas technology in Central Asia (www.earthwire.org/kz, May 15, 2005).

New Textbook on Ecology Compiled In Central Asia

16. Recently, the program for Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) conducted its final meeting on its ecological education program, which has been implemented in 2004-2005 with the support of the Embassy of Great Britain and UNESCO. The goal of the project is distribution of new Kazakhstani ecology textbooks in Central Asian schools. The textbooks were compiled according to new educational standards that envision the active participation of pupils in environmental protection and the development of ecology-mindedness in the young (Panorama, May 6, 2005).

International Experts Train Kazakhstani Scientists to Detect, Guard Radioactive Material

17. Experts from Australia and the U.S. conducted a five-day training course for nuclear companies of Kazakhstan that covered the detection and securing of radioactive materials. "Training participants are learning to detect radioactive sources using the equipment supplied by American colleagues," according to a press release from Kazakhstan's Institute of Nuclear Physics. After the seminar, the equipment was donated to the Kazakhstani organizations taking part in the training. The training was conducted by American experts from the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Sandia, Oak Ridge and Argonne National Laboratories, and Australian specialists from a Canberra-based company (Interfax-Kazakhstan, May 17, 2005).

Mazhilis Approves Draft Law on Ecological Audits

18. On May 18, Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) deputies approved a draft law amending Kazakhstan's legislation on ecological audits. The main goal of the draft law is to establish the legal and organizational bases of ecological audits. According to the Minister of Environmental Protection, Aitkul Samakova, the draft law elaborates the concept and goals of the ecological audit. In particular, ecological audits are necessary to reveal and assess ecological risks as well as to improve the process for developing recommendations on ecological security. According to the draft law, the central executive body on environmental protection is vested with the additional functions of evaluating auditors and determining the need for mandatory ecological audits. Mandatory audits are carried out in limited cases, e.g. in cases of environmental damage, for the purpose of increasing the ecological security of an enterprise's activities and in the case of reorganization or bankruptcy of an enterprise (Gazeta.kz, May 18, 2005).

First Part of Syr Darya and Northern Aral Sea Project to Be Completed Soon

19. The first stage of the project to regulate the Syr Darya river-bed and Northern Aral Sea, which is being implemented

by the GOK and financed by the World Bank, is about to be completed, said the World Bank's Permanent Representative in Kazakhstan, Loup Brefort. The cost of the project is \$85.79 million. It is co-financed by the World Bank (\$64.5 million) and GOK (\$21.29 million). The goal of the project is the conservation of the northern Aral Sea and the enhancement of the environmental situation in the Syr Darya river ecosystem. According to GOK official Anatoly Ryabtsev, one of the main facilities involved in the project - the hydraulic structure "Aitek" has been put into operation, at a cost of \$11.6 million. The construction of a new dam in the Northern Aral, the Aklak hydraulic power system, will be completed this autumn (Gazeta.kz, May 18, 2005).

New Gas Treatment Unit to Be Tested At Mittal Steel

Temirtau in September

10. A new gas treatment facility that would effectively recycle waste gases will be tested in September at the Mittal Steel Temirtau metallurgical plant (previously known as Ispat-Karmet). "The industrial module of the facility will be ready in September, and we will test it at the plant," said the facility's inventor Alexander Borisenko. The first vice president of Kazakhstan's National Engineering Academy, Nadir Nadirov, called the technology invented by Borisenko "revolutionary" and said that "mankind has waited long" for this invention (Interfax-Kazakhstan, May 19, 2005).

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